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LETTER DATED 7 NOVEMBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LUXEMBOURG TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to bring to your attention the statement on the situation in the Republic of the Congo made on 3 November 1997 by the President of the European Union.

I should appreciate it if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Jean-Louis WOLZFELD
Permanent Representative
of Luxembourg
to the United Nations

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the situation in the Republic of the Congo made on 3 November 1997 by the Presidency of the European Union

The European Union has been following with considerable concern the developments in the Republic of the Congo. It reiterates that it has always supported the international mediation undertaken by President Hadj Omar Bongo of the Gabonese Republic and Mr. Mohammed Sahnoun, Special Representative of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. It expresses its deep regret that the mediation was not successful and deplores the fact that the political crisis has turned into an armed conflict that has brought about a change of government without the people of the Congo having been able to express their wishes in free elections.

The Union condemns any outside interference in the Republic of the Congo, in particular the intervention of foreign forces, in breach of the Charter of the United Nations, and asks for all foreign forces, including mercenaries, to be withdrawn immediately.

The Union deplores the heavy loss of life caused by the conflict in the Congo, including among the civilian population. It calls upon Mr. Sassou Nguesso to respect fully the human rights of all the inhabitants of the Republic of the Congo in accordance with the relevant provisions of public international law and to refrain from any persecution following the change in power. It is concerned about the fate of the foreign nationals and refugees living in Congolese territory and calls upon the authorities to ensure their safety. It also calls upon them to return forthwith to a constitutional order and to embark irrevocably upon the pursuit of peace and national reconciliation, which are also preconditions for the return of refugees and the economic reconstruction of the country.

The Union asks the authorities to give renewed impetus to the democratic process and to prepare for free, transparent and fair democratic elections, which should be held at the earliest opportunity under international supervision. It asks all parties to the conflict to lay down their arms, demobilize the militia and return their members to civilian life.

The European Union supplies emergency humanitarian aid to the victims of the armed conflict. Further cooperation will depend on the progress made towards national reconciliation and the legitimization of the authorities.

The Central and Eastern European countries of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, the associated country Cyprus and the countries of the European Free Trade Association, Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.